

Remarks

Reconsideration is requested in view of the above amendments and the following remarks.

Claims 1-8, and 11-26 have been allowed. Editorial amendments have been made to the claims in order to improve the form. It is submitted that claims 1-8, and 11-26 remain allowable for the same reasons for the allowance of these claims in the last Office Action.

Claims 9 and 10 have been rejected under 35 USC 102(e) as being anticipated by Pillay-Esnault. This rejection is believed to be inapplicable to claims 9 and 10 as amended herein.

Claim 9 has been amended to include some of the limitations of allowed claim 1. Specifically, claim 9 now recites plural switching devices, each comprising plural ports; at least one terminal operable to be connected to any of the plural ports of said plural switching devices; and wherein each of said plural switching devices further comprises a MAC address table operable to store MAC address information for each of the plural ports. Pillay-Esnault does not disclose this feature. Therefore, it is submitted that claims 9 and 10 as amended herein are not anticipated by Pillay-Esnault under 35 USC 102(e).

In view of the above amendments and remarks, it is submitted that all of the pending claims 1-26 are allowable and that the present application is in condition for allowance. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone to resolve any remaining issues.

Respectfully submitted,

Masao OOMOTO et al.

/Jeffrey R. Filipek/

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